

Application No.: 09/892,543
Amendment Dated: September 30, 2003
Reply to Office Action of: May 2, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph at page 5, lines 9-20, with the following rewritten paragraph:

B1
--The mixture solution taken out of the recovery column through a top portion thereof also includes the alcohol-based solvent contained in the copolymer solution along with unreacted vinyl acetate and the alcohol-based solvent blown into the column. This mixture solution is introduced into another treatment column, and vinyl acetate is separated from the mixture solution by extractive distillation with water. ~~And, and~~ it is taken out of the treatment column as a mixed solvent solution of alcohol and water. Furthermore, by separating and purifying this water/alcohol mixture solution, an alcohol-based solvent can be recovered. The unreacted vinyl acetate and the alcohol-based solvent thus recovered are reused in the copolymerization. The alcohol-based solvent recovered also is reused in the above-mentioned recovery of vinyl acetate.--

Please replace the paragraph at page 8, lines 19-26, with the following rewritten paragraph:

B2
--First, 1 weight part of sodium hydroxide was added to 100 weight parts of the methanol solution. The copolymer was saponified while blowing a methanol vapor at 110 °C and at 343.4 kPa (3.5 kg/cm²). Methyl acetate formed as a by-product was distilled with a part of methanol, and expelled from the system. Further, a vapor of water/methanol was blown into the solution of the saponified product (EVOH) obtained to ~~distil~~ distill the solvent, and an EVOH solution (methanol/water = 65/35; weight ratio) having a polymer

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concentration of 35 wt % was obtained.--

B2
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